

Michael F. Easley  
Governor



State of North Carolina  
Office of the Governor

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Contact: Seth Effron  
Phone: 919/733-5612

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**GOV. EASLEY ASKS FOR REVIEW AND UPDATE OF E-MAIL RECORDS POLICIES**  
*Changes In Technology Since Last Major Revision of Public Records Law Require New Look*

**RALEIGH** – Gov. Mike Easley today asked Franklin Freeman, his senior assistant for government affairs, to lead a government agency panel that will conduct a comprehensive review of policies concerning the retention of e-mail messages under the state’s public records law. The review will encompass the governor’s office and all cabinet and other administrative offices directly under the governor’s control.

“Use of e-mail and other electronic forms of communication have expanded in ways that were not contemplated in 1993 during a major update of our state’s public records law in which I was involved when I was Attorney General,” said Easley, who at the same time established the Sunshine Office in the Attorney General’s Office. “Some people use e-mail instead of the telephone and others use e-mail instead of a fax machine. It is important to look at our policies to be sure records that are public are treated as such.”

Freeman, a former state Supreme Court Justice and head of the state’s Administrative Office of the Courts, will put together a committee to look at the public records procedures and the various agency policies concerning retention of e-mail messages. In 2002, Freeman was given the responsibility to resolve public records disputes between the news media and government.

Freeman’s review will include use of state-owned e-mail systems as well as electronic text communications on state-owned or leased wireless devices such as Blackberry handheld units. Meetings of the review committee will be open and it will hold public hearings to get input from the various groups with interest in the issue along with the general public.

Easley has asked Freeman to come up with proposals that can be implemented by executive directive or changes in current policy and procedure. If changes in current law are necessary, that too will be addressed. The panel will make a preliminary report to the governor by May 20.

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